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| http://www.izzit.org/events/images/clear.gif | |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | | ***Hot-dog Hysteria*** | |  |  | | --- | --- | | http://www.izzit.org/images/printthis.gif | [**Printable Version of Article**](http://www.izzit.org/events/print_source.php?ID=1163) | | | The Washington Times  March 1, 2010  Editorial: Hot-dog Hysteria Big Brother Takes a Bite out of Common Sense  Believe it or not, the government is about to regulate the shape of hot dogs. Bureaucrats at the Food and Drug Administration, the Department of Agriculture and the Consumer Product Safety Commission are studying how to change the shape of hot dogs to prevent youngsters from choking. As a result, recent headlines have warned about "killer hot dogs" and "Doctors urging for a safer, choke-free hot dog."  It's true that compared to some other foods, hot dogs seem to present a slightly higher risk. Of the 66 to 77 choking deaths for children younger than 10 in 2006, hot dogs reportedly accounted for about 11 to 13 deaths. But this claim of relative risk isn't conclusive because there has been no attempt to account for the fact that children might be eating more hot dogs than other types of food.  Changing the shape of the beloved "tube steak" could reduce but not eliminate that number. Unfortunately, some kids will likely still choke on redesigned hot dogs, no matter what, just like some children choke on hamburgers, apples or other foods.  The death rate per hot dog is incredibly small. American kids younger than 10 eat approximately 1.8 billion hot dogs per year, which works out to an average of about 45 hot dogs per child per annum. That pegs the death rate per hot dog from choking at 0.0000007 percent. If crossing a street were so safe, parents would breathe a sigh of relief.  Any child's death is tragic, but the government cannot regulate everything and create a risk-free kindergarten utopia. Perhaps bureaucrats will go after bathtubs next. More than 90 children younger than 5 died from drowning in bathtubs in 2006. Forty-three children younger than 10 died riding bicycles. Even in extremely regulated areas, there are many more deaths. In that age group, more than 1,100 died as a result of motor-vehicle accidents that year.  Life involves some risks. If government agencies don't have anything better to do than regulate hot dogs, their budgets should be cut to help them focus on essential duties. | | | |  |

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